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The Making of an American School-Teacher

By

FORREST CRISSEY

**Author of "A Country Boy," "Tattlings of a
Retired Politician," etc.**

**C. M. BARNES COMPANY
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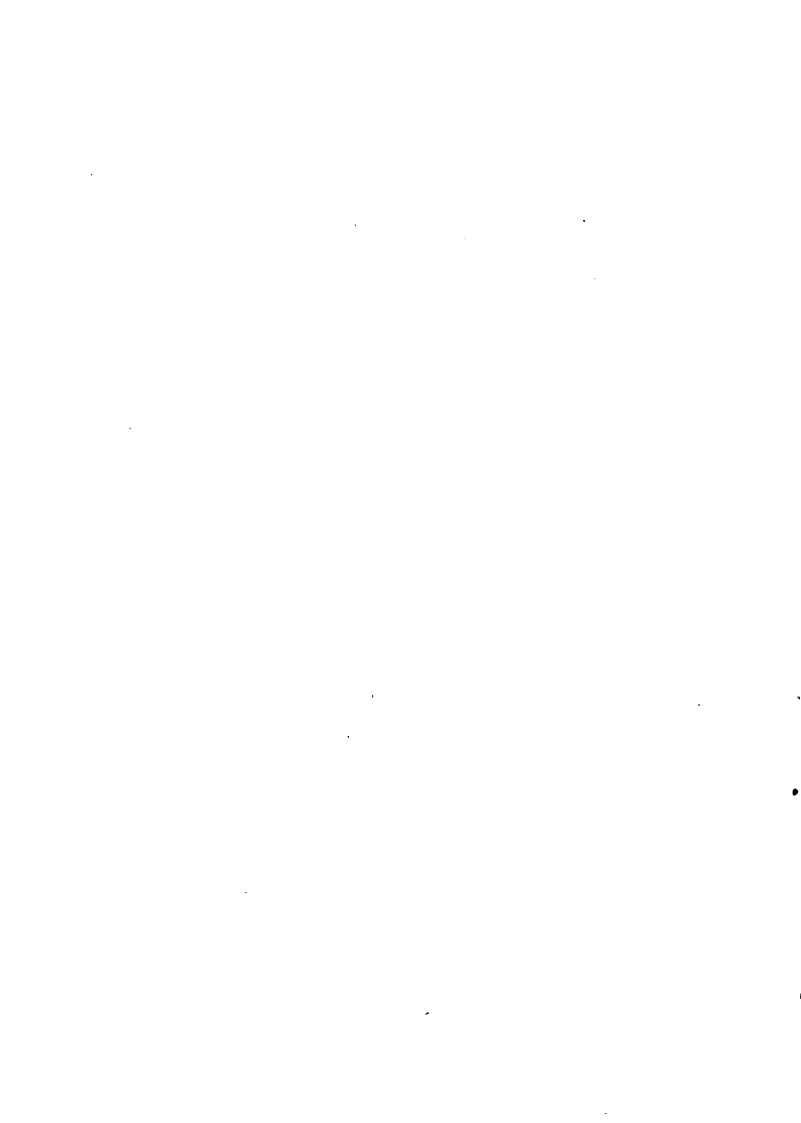
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

A few words only are needed to introduce this little book. If it has any quality of helpfulness, it will speak for itself better than any preface could do.

It was first published serially in the Saturday Evening Post and merits, it is believed, a more permanent form, especially as it touches upon problems of Public School Administration that are of universal concern.

It will interest some readers to know, others will readily recognize the fact that this book is the life-story of Mr. E. G. Cooley, head of the Public School System of Chicago and one of the foremost educators of America. He has under his charge 259 schools, 5,800 teachers and 280,000 pupils—truly a great responsibility. Mr. Cooley has had a rare career—a career still unfinished, but rich in suggestion to all who have a care for the processes by which a real education is developed.



THE MAKING OF AN AMERICAN SCHOOL-TEACHER

I.

HOW THE PRAIRIE BOY CAME OUT OF THE TALL GRASS.

At the start the School-Teacher was simply the Prairie Boy. His forebears were fighters and trail-breakers of the staunchest Puritan stock. The old Massachusetts Reports say that thirty-three of them fought in the Revolutionary War. Springfield, Massachusetts, was the original settlement from which they sent out generation after generation to the wide fields of the adventurous West.

Abner, the great-grandfather of the Prairie Boy, started westward in 1806, and was one of the founders of the first settlement in Western New York. The grandfather, named Elias, was an Abolitionist of the extremest type. He had a large family of boys, and five of them started westward before they were twenty-one years of age. The one who was destined to become the father of our School-Teacher spent his youth in

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New York State working in a sawmill—a business which his father had followed before him. He walked across the State of Ohio and did not make a permanent stop until he reached Strawberry Point, in Eastern Iowa. Here he put up a little one-room shack of the flimsiest sort and secured a patch of land on the Maquoketa River for the site of his mill. It did not seem to occur to him that a change to a new country might call for a change of occupation. His first big task was the building of a brush-dam across the river to furnish the mill with water-power. The story of this sawmill enterprise sharply illustrates the bulldog tenacity of purpose that characterized both the father and the son.

The first spring freshet after the sawmill had been put up swept away the dam as if it were a mere brush-heap. Three times the dam was replaced, and the sawmill enterprise was only abandoned when its owner's Abolition blood became stirred by the appeals for recruits which swept the country at the outbreak of the War.

One night, in 1862, the father returned home from the village late and with a face of unusual seriousness.

"Well, I've enlisted," was his terse announcement.

The mother cried with abandon for the greater

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part of the night. But, after that, she faced the situation bravely and without complaint. Every article of property that could be spared was sold at once, and before the soldier marched away with his company, he saw his little family moved into a small house in the village.

At this time it began to dawn upon the Prairie Boy that his mother had but one thought and purpose in her life and that the way to spell it was S-C-H-O-O-L. However, he is now keenly awake to the fact that she had many other cares and interests beyond keeping him in school and that she was a woman of the true pioneer type, possessed of uncommon abilities. The soldier received in "county scrip" one hundred dollars of bounty money, which was promptly discounted at one-half its face value for cash. Although the volunteer received only thirteen dollars a month, he managed to send home ten dollars of this amount—and sometimes all of it—every thirty days.

When he returned, after the close of the War, his thrifty wife presented him with a house and lot in the village and three hundred dollars in cash. It is true that, after the soldier became a lieutenant, his wages were slightly increased, but the industry and good management of the mother were responsible for the fact that she was able

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to take good care of her little family and also put by something for the future. As the Prairie Boy was only five years of age when they moved into the village, he was, of course, unable to be of any practical help about the house. There was, however, one thing which he could do, and that was to hold the candle in the woodshed, evenings, while his mother sawed the wood for her fire. Even then, this rough and awkward toil gave to his mother a touch of heroism in the eyes of the little candle-bearer. The second day after they came into the village, the Prairie Boy was sent to the town school. Every small happening of that day was photographed upon his mind and is often recalled by him now. The village school did not have a summer term, and quite naturally the Prairie Boy looked forward to the summer as a time of play and vacation. He was doomed to disappointment, however, for at once, after the close of the village school, he was sent out to the nearest country school where the "summer term" was in progress—and he was kept there, too, until the close of the term.

The Prairie Boy was only six or seven years of age when he began his career as an earner. His first employment was that of dropping corn for a farmer who lived close to the edge of the village. Soon he learned how to handle a hoe

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and later to husk corn. All his earnings were turned into the family fund. The day when he was given a large, red penny "for his own" stands out in his memory with sharp distinctness. With splendid recklessness, he spent it for a stick of striped candy.

When at last the father returned from the War he became an insurance agent and did a thriving business, keeping a horse and riding the country for miles about. His new vocation brought him in contact with nearly all the men of the county, and as a result he was elected supervisor and given other proofs of his neighbors' regard for him as one of the "bright" men of the community. Altogether, affairs in the home of the Prairie Boy had never seemed so promising as in those first years following the War.

No occurrence in all his boyhood was more painful to the boy than an incident in this period. One evening, at the close of family worship, after the father had arisen from his knees, he slipped an arm around the shoulder of the boy and slowly said to him: "Ed, something happened down at the post-office this evening that gave me a great deal of gratification. One of our leading citizens said to me that he regarded you as one of the best little boys in this town."

Instantly the cheeks of the Prairie Boy flushed

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red as a maple-leaf after a frost, and the fires of shame seemed to burn him from head to foot. If his father had said that the leading citizen had denounced him as a scamp and a rascal, the shame that would have followed could not have equaled that which he felt on being called "one of the best little boys in town."

Up to this time, the only book in the house, besides the Bible, was a bound volume of Godey's Lady's Book—a popular magazine of that period. One day something happened which proved of far-reaching importance in the life of the Prairie Boy; the township Library Association disbanded, and the books were distributed among those who had helped start and support it. The insurance agent's share in this distribution was a volume of Rollin's Ancient History, beginning with the successors of Alexander the Great. By daylight and candlelight the boy followed the fortunes of the successors of Alexander with all the intensity that the lad of to-day feels in the heroes of Henty's pages.

Here were fighters and philosophers who breathed greatness and who lived in an atmosphere of fierce and exalted heroism. Of all the great figures which stalked through the pages of Rollin, Eumenes was easily first in the affections of the Prairie Boy. The unflinching loyalty of

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this great leader to his ideals, his superiors and his associates caught the impressionable imagination of the lad, stirred his blood and soaked into the fibre of his being. With an intensity of interest hardly comprehensible to the school-boy of to-day, the Prairie Boy reveled in the sieges of Athens and of Rhodes; the exploits of the Achean League; the hand-to-hand combat between the Roman Legion and the Macedonian Phalanx; the dramatic story of the siege of Syracuse, with the genius of the great mathematician, Archimedes, pitted against the whole Roman army; and the tragic romance of Antony and Cleopatra.

The father was so proud of the lad's achievement as a "solid reader" that he mentioned it at the post-office.

Like the other post-office gossip, it soon became public property and circulated throughout the entire community. A somewhat well-read farmer, by the name of Jacques, was among those who heard of the boy's scholarly acquirements. The next day he appeared at the office of the insurance agent with a copy of Josephus in his hand.

"That," he remarked, "is for your boy. If he likes Rollin, he will surely like Josephus. Tell him it is a present from a man who likes to run

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across a boy who has a natural taste for good reading."

After he had devoured Josephus and reread his favorite portions of Rollin, his historic thirst was still unsatisfied, and he borrowed a copy of Plutarch's Lives from the son of the local Baptist minister. Here was another feast as much to his relish as those which had preceded it.

But his reputation, at the age of eleven, of being "the greatest reader in Strawberry Point" brought other grist to his mill. The next offering was from an eccentric uncle and was in the shape of a huge sheep-bound volume of Shakespeare's Complete Plays. His bent for history guided him to Julius Caesar and the other great historical dramas. Here was history "in the doing," not in the recounting—history with the lifeblood of action.

A thin, limp copy of Walter Scott's poems also came into his hands about this time and charmed him with its romance and vivid descriptions. His taste for poetry was awakened by Scott, and his eye fell covetously upon a paper covered copy of Milton, in the window of a general store. Two years passed, however, before he had fifty cents he could spare for the purchase of this volume. But its reading repaid him for the months of envious waiting.

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From Scott's poems to his novels was a natural step, and these were about the first books of fiction which the Prairie Boy read. The reading of these great romances was distributed over some four years, from the time he was thirteen until he was seventeen. He read them in his attic room, out under the trees, and wherever he went.

When the Prairie Boy reached the age of fifteen years the son of the Baptist minister persuaded him that he should make any sacrifice necessary in order to attend the State University at Iowa City, to which place the minister was going to educate his lad. This argument was particularly effective when accompanied by the suggestion that the best scholar and the greatest reader in Strawberry Point certainly ought not to shop short of a college education.

For several years the vacations of the Prairie Boy had been put in at hard work, the results of which had been carefully saved. First he worked on the railroad, then being built through Strawberry Point, as water-boy, and later as the driver of a scraper. Also he had contrived to pick up odd jobs, and in the autumn had found profitable employment in the harvest-fields. His thrift and activity resulted in an accumulation of two hun-

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dred dollars in cash, which he was at liberty to spend for an education if he so desired.

As the delights of knowledge were spread out before him by the preacher's son, a bargain was soon struck with the minister himself, whereby the Prairie Boy was to be boarded throughout his University course for \$2.50 a week, and was to have free passage in a buckboard, drawn by a pair of mustangs, over the one hundred and twenty-five miles of dirt roads between Strawberry Point and Iowa City. Two days were required to make this trip, and it was the boy's first venture out into the world.

The University and preparatory school had been in session for five weeks when the two boys entered. The Prairie Boy had just begun the study of algebra, had never looked into physics, chemistry or science of any kind, and had never seen a man or woman who knew Latin or Greek. It was, therefore, arranged that he should have a chance to do extra work to "catch up" in the preparatory school. He was innocent of geometry, and University algebra was decidedly beyond him. In spite of all these handicaps, however, the end of the first year gave him a record of 100 in Latin, and he was even with his class in the other studies.

He did not then understand just how he was

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able to accomplish this feat, which astonished both his teachers and his fellow-students; but in after years he realized that it was largely because he had become used to digesting the strong meat of solid reading, and because of the intensity with which he concentrated all his energies upon the thing in hand. Having read only solid books—most of them great books—his reading sense had not been pampered and weakened by feeding on stuff “written down” to the childish level.

He had escaped the mushy baby-foods of the modern “juveniles”—a few flakes of history sweetened with the syrup of fable or folk-lore—and had cut his intellectual teeth upon the bone and sinew of real literature. His capacity to get interested in books which held and captivated men of intellect and culture had never been undermined by a diet of “reading made easy,” and he had no shrinking from the mental effort required in the mastication of literature made for men.

Whatever the Prairie Boy read he gave himself to it with a whole-hearted intensity which, for the time being, shut out all else and made the thing described by the writer so distinct that he could “see it.” But he was not in any sense a bookworm or a recluse. His physical strength and energy, as well as his necessities, forbade

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this. Soon after his arrival, he started out to explore the town. One morning, while scouting about on the edge of the village, he discovered a pile of cordwood two hundred feet long. In less than an hour from the time he had encountered it, he had made a contract with the owner to saw the wood into stove length, at \$1.25 a cord.

Thereafter every morning and evening saw him doing an hour's stunt with the bucksaw which he borrowed. Somehow he did not miss the gymnasium or the ball team so long as the woodpile held out. And his engagement with the bucksaw, his lessons and his incidental reading took the edge off his energies and he had little appetite for hazing or "scrapes" of any sort.

When the spring term came to an end, and he took passage for home, he was bubbling with enthusiasm for a college education. He had tasted first blood and thirsted for more. Almost he admitted to himself the possibility of finally going to one of the great Universities in the East.

Urged on by the incentive of providing himself with the sinews of war for a full college course, he lost no time in hustling for work and quickly "hired out" as a farm-hand at twenty dollars a month. He continued at this until the coming of

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harvest. Crops that year were heavy and the call for harvesters was uncommonly keen. Farmers freely offered two dollars a day, and the Prairie Boy was not long in arriving at the conclusion that it was harvest-time for him, as well as for the farmers, and that he must make the most of his opportunity. After the crops of the farmer for whom he worked had been harvested, he said to his working-mate:

"Chris, you and I can earn more than the rest of these fellows; but we'll never get more if we don't ask for it. You have a horse and buggy and we can go through the county and get three dollars a day where the common drifters get two and two-and-a-half."

"All right; we try it," responded the good-natured German, and they soon struck out through the country.

Before evening of the first day out, they came to a big farm with sweeping fields of prime grain ripe for cutting.

"Yes," said the farmer, "I need you, and I'll pay three a day—but you'll have to earn it, you bet!"

They were out at sunrise and bending to their task in the wake of the old-fashioned reaper. The field was smooth and level, the horses strong and brisk walkers, and the machine new and in

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perfect trim. Every condition was right for setting the binders a pace—and the ethics of the harvest-field forbade them to fall behind in the race.

As noontime approached, the windrow of grain that fell from the clicking sickle of the reaper seemed to writhe and squirm before the eyes of the Prairie Boy; the landscape grew dim and blurred, and each time he bent to his bundle the thought came to him: "I'll topple over this time, sure; I can't straighten up—not once more!"

When one hundred and ninety acres of small grains on the Davis farm had been harvested and the farmer handed out sixty-three dollars to the Prairie Boy, the lad felt richer than the owner of the crops and the land—for he had saved nine-three dollars from the season's work. By the time he reached home, however, he had figured out his financial situation and faced the fact that, considering the clothes he must buy, he was far short of enough.

In a discussion of the Ways and Means Committee at the supper-table, the evening of his arrival home, the father suggested:

"Why don't you stand the examination, get a certificate and then go after the trustees of District Number Ten?"

He took the examination and secured the cer-

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tificate and the school. There was nothing, however, in this first attempt at school-teaching to indicate that the Prairie Boy would one day be recognized as one of our leading educators.

When he returned to Iowa City, at the opening of the spring term, the familiar buildings of the University looked marvelously good to him; he was no longer a "greenhorn," but a returning student who had established himself with a circle of teachers and students. As he had missed two terms, he promptly arranged that he might make up lost ground.

At the close of the spring term he went back to Strawberry Point and to the hay and harvest fields, where he made the best wages going—but not quite so much as he had made the previous summer. His educational ardor was still uncooled and the fall found him once more "at the seat of learning," but this time in the University proper.

As the term advanced, he began to grow more interested in the social side of school-life; to awaken to the fact that there were girls in the world and that it was pleasant to associate with them. Then he was beset by secret doubts of the practical value of a college education.

The coming of the Christmas vacation found him in a mood approaching home-sickness and he

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yielded to the impulse to "go back and see the home folks." He packed his belongings and surprised his mother by appearing unannounced at the family table. But a still greater surprise was in store for the good woman whose secret dreams for the future of the Prairie Boy had exceeded his own. With his usual abruptness, he announced that he was not going back to college.

It was not so easy as he had expected to find a good position, and his hunt for employment ended in his apprenticing himself to the local wagon-maker for five dollars a month and board.

One day the young partner in the business called to the Prairie Boy:

"Ed, there's the Methodist preacher's girl over there on the corner. Ain't she a clipper? The last Conference sent the old man back here. I'm going to keep company with that girl."

"Yes," quietly answered the Prairie Boy, going back to his bench. But, as his jack-plane purred along the edge of the oak board in the vise, he said:

"I'll see if you do! I always did like that girl."

After the shop was closed that evening, he bought a new necktie and a fresh box of paper collars and "took a scrub." Then he attended the Methodist sociable, paid his best attentions to

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the preacher's daughter, and had the satisfaction of being accepted as her escort home.

Five dollars a month spending-money might have sufficed a youth of retiring habits in sleepy old Strawberry Point, but this limitation soon began to pinch the lively Prairie Boy, especially as he felt it necessary to meet the social pace which he knew his rival for the favor of the preacher's girl was ready to set. He was determined not to lose the advantage he had gained at the start of the race through any failure to make the contest interesting, and this meant more money. For him to think was to act, and he at once put the case before his father, who had gone into the prosperous business of selling sewing-machines and organs.

"You've got the makings of a good business-getter in you, and I'll give you twenty dollars a month and find you," said the father.

The offer was instantly accepted. The Prairie Boy did not realize then that this simple step from the wagon-shop to the sewing-machine wagon meant his matriculation in the College of Hustle. For the next three years he constantly whetted his wits by contact with the hard trading instincts of the farmers and villagers.

When once he had won the girl, he had determined upon an immediate marriage "without any

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waits or frills," and to this end he started again for the preacher's home.

In the little town he traded one sewing-machine for a cook-stove, another for a dining-table and a scanty outfit of furniture, and, partially on the strength of these negotiations, secured the consent of the preacher's daughter to an immediate marriage. Their wedding journey was made from Asbury Church, where the girl then lived, to Dubuque, in a lumber-wagon loaded with their household goods. From Dubuque they went by rail to Strawberry Point.

Shortly after he had assumed the responsibilities of a family, a thunderbolt of disaster struck his little home. A certain clause of the contracts upon which his father and himself had sold hundreds of sewing-machines was attacked in the courts, and the case appealed to the Supreme court. That it could be adversely decided had hardly been considered by the agent, so sure was he of his cause. But the highest tribunal ruled against him, and this decision involved a judgment which stripped the father of all his savings and swept the son out of the best job he had ever held. The young man at once fell back upon his bucksaw and began to "cultivate the backache" at a dollar and a quarter a cord, while looking for better work. Soon he was given his old place

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in the wagon-shop, making wheels at \$3.50 a set—wheels which are in use to-day!

In the fall he took a leave of absence from the shop because he could earn more in the harvest-fields. Here he met an old farmer, out on the Hard Pan, who said:

"We want you to teach our school. The big boys have turned out two or three teachers, but I don't think they'll be able to ride your neck."

The Prairie Boy took the school—and a skirmish and a pitched battle settled the question of his supremacy.

The following summer the creamery movement reached the dairy country of Iowa, and the basement of an old tavern in Strawberry Point was converted into a butter factory. Here the Prairie Boy found employment at seven dollars a week, because of his ability to do the hard physical work involved in handling four thousand pounds of milk a day by main strength. The owner of the creamery was a school-trustee, and, when the teacher of the grammar-grade left, he said to the buttermaker:

"We've come to the conclusion that a young man of your muscle and grit is needed to handle the boys in the grammar-room. They're a lively crew, but you can manage them—and the salary is thirty dollars a month."

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The man of the milk-cans replied that he was too hot-tempered to make a good school-teacher; but this excuse only seemed to increase the eagerness of the trustees, and he finally yielded to their wishes.

In the course of his first year in the village school, an incident occurred which proved the turning-point of his life and resulted in the recovery of his lost educational impulse. One day the school was visited by the County Superintendent of Schools, William Ewart, a cousin of William Ewart Gladstone, the great English statesman, who was then at the height of his career. The superintendent's call in the grammar-room was short and his comments few. At the close of school, that day, the young teacher asked the principal:

"What did the old man have to say about things in my room?"

"Well," responded the principal, "he said you were a rough specimen of a schoolmaster, but, if you knew how much native ability you had, you'd wake up and begin to dig."

This comment gave the teacher of the grammar department a jolt which shook his mental foundation. "A rough specimen of a school-teacher! * * * Wake up and begin to dig!" These words stayed with him day and night until he was thoroughly

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aroused. Out of his broodings came a purpose, and finally he wrote to the superintendent a letter which was to do for him more than he dreamed.

Then he said to his young wife: "We're going to have a house—a home of our own; and I'm going to build it with my own hands, too."

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II.

A NEW GRIP ON A LOST AMBITION.

The young teacher now began to look at life from a new viewpoint. He was awakened to the recovery of a lost ambition, to a soberer sense of responsibility to others and to himself, to a broader, surer grasp of the value and the duty of doing a man's work in the world.

He wrote to the County Superintendent for a list of books which would be helpful to a young teacher who had made up his mind to try to make something of himself. The answer to this request was kindly and stimulating, and the list of books recommended was solid and well chosen, including such volumes as David A. Wells' Natural Philosophy and Green's Shorter English History.

Part and parcel of this new impulse to build broader his mental structure was the determination to build a house of his own. He had saved sixty-five dollars from his earnings and his wife had come into possession of one hundred and fifty through her family. These sums were sufficient to make the initial payment on a village lot

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and to buy the stone for the foundation of the house, the lumber being bought on credit.

In those days "sun-up" was the signal for the School-Teacher to leave his bed and hurry to the site of his future home, where first he dug the foundation ditches and then tended mason while the underpinning was being laid. Union hours were not then known in Strawberry Point. Getting out the foundation-beams according to the crude working-plans he had drawn was a simple matter, but, when he came to cutting joist and rafter, he confessed himself "stumped." Quickly he called to his aid the friendly village carpenter, who sawed him a pattern of each of these timbers. Vacation was at hand and he hired as a helper, at fifty cents a day, one of his schoolboys.

When the house was barely "sheeted up" and only one room in a half-habitable state, the family partially moved in—the cooking being done on a rough "arch" of field-stone out of doors, while the baby and the two-year-old were swung in home-made hammocks. Even the hardships, obstacles and calamities of that season of house-building seemed only to add to the joy of the task. When a stray dog snatched the family beefsteak from the skillet, the School-Teacher and his plucky wife laughed over their loss, and when his mistakes as a builder drove him to a seat on the fence

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to "study the thing out," he felt a glow of unfamiliar happiness.

His hardest problem was the building of the cornice, and in this he made so many mistakes that, when he reached the rear of the house, his finishing lumber was exhausted. Again he consulted his carpenter friend, who said:

"Just put on a dutchman and let it go—it's at the back, anyway."

"The dutchman," or patch, was put on, and it has ever since stood in the School-Teacher's eyes as the most individual touch about the house of his own building.

The unfinished attic was dedicated to his personal use as a den in which to continue the other and longer task of building upon which he had entered. A tacit understanding was established that, once in his retreat, he was not to be disturbed. This practice of having some room in which he was safe from intrusion became a family institution and guaranteed him a sustained pitch of application to study otherwise impossible. However, he could not shut out himself, and at times the spring smells, the shout of happy youngsters and the varied calls of the great out-of-doors world were irresistible; his books were dropped, and he fled the house, taking the shortest cut to the pasture-lot where he knew the

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boys were playing baseball. And what a welcome they always gave him! This struggle with the impulse to get with the boys in the sports of the open field was one of the hardest of his life. At last, however, he learned how to hold steady and say no to himself.

Every month he added to his library of solid books, particularly in the line of science, and, in the long night hours, almost literally ate out the heart of every one of them. His associates in the school noted the change in him, and particularly the principal saw that his growth was like that of the corn in the rich gumbo soil of the Iowa prairies. One day, in the School-Teacher's fourth year in the grammar-room, the principal said to him:

"Ed, I'm going to resign for a place in Dakota. You're an abler man than I am and I'm going to do all I can to get you elected principal." And although this unexpected promotion was given him, it was offered with the understanding that he might not be called upon to do more than "finish out the term."

"They've cut the cloth rather wide for me," he told his wife, "and expect me to teach half a dozen classes, including rhetoric, physiology, solid geometry and natural philosophy in which

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I've never had a day's schooling—but I'm going to tackle it, just the same!"

He taught these branches and kept a close eye upon the elementary-rooms, and still found time in which to play a little ball with the boys. At the end of the term he was re-elected principal and his salary was raised to sixty-five dollars a month.

The next summer brought him in contact with a new American institution, the "county institute." Here he touched shoulders with men from the outside world of scholarship, men who were forces in the educational world. One institute conductor was the superintendent of the Cresco Schools, another was a Princeton man named Webb, who took long walks with him and talked of Tyndall, Huxley, Spencer and Mill, and lent our teacher the famous old series of "red backs" edited by Doctor Youmans. Here was new meat for his midnight feast, and for months he reveled in Spencer's Study of Sociology, Tyndall's Forms of Water, and Huxley's Man's Place in Nature. Best of all, as they strolled under the stars, those nights of the county institute session, the Princeton man gave the "rough specimen of a school-master" a fine sympathy and a gospel of encouragement that carried far into the years to come.

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"I didn't have as good a chance as you have," the School-Teacher was told.

His new stock of books kept the School-Teacher digging for two years and his study of Mill converted him to the doctrine of free trade—and he did not hesitate openly to defend his change of faith. Finally, in 1884, he bolted the Republican ticket and flaunted his Democratic colors in the face of the community, who regarded this defection as "rank heresy." Although re-elected to the principalship, the feeling which his political "brashness" had stirred up in the minds of the trustees resulted in his being shut out of the board meetings and by being generally snubbed by these local dignitaries. But he had the boys with him as a solid support and his usefulness was unimpaired.

When the "fair-week" vacation came in September he decided to pay a visit to his institute friend, Professor Weld, at Cresco, who was recognized as the ablest of the local educators in that part of the State. On the train he met several other teachers, who said "So you're after the Cresco place, too?" His protests that he did not understand their question were answered by an incredulous laugh.

But a still greater surprise was awaiting for

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him when the kindly old scholar at the head of the Cresco schools confided to him:

"I'm going to leave here at once for a better position, and there is not a teacher of my acquaintance I'd rather leave in my old place than yourself."

"That's out of the question, sir," responded the School-Teacher. "I'm not equal to it. You know I've never had but one term in college, and I'm a 'rough specimen of a school-master' at best. No; I can't even consider being a candidate for the place."

"Come downtown with me, anyway," said the Cresco principal. "There's going to be a board meeting."

Outside the board-rooms a man suddenly grasped the hand of the School-Teacher with a grip that told of comradeship. The look of surprise on the face of the local principal was met with the explanation from his townsman:

"We've met at more ball-games and free-trade discussions, Mr. Weld, than you ever attended. When it comes to baseball and Democratic mass meetings we're the champion pair of fans in Iowa."

The School-Teacher waited in the drug-store for the board meeting to close, but he had little more than settled himself when he was summoned

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to appear before the board, where he was informed that he had been elected principal to fill the vacancy, at a salary of one thousand dollars a year. Only after being urged by the fellow baseball fan and by the retiring principal did he consent to accept, on condition that he could secure a release from the board at his home school.

That night he caught a wild freight back to Strawberry Point, and next day placed the situation before the astonished school trustees of that place. As most of them had made no secret of their hostility to him, on account of his change of political beliefs, they were not in position to refuse his request for a release, and this was granted.

It was a strange situation which the schoolmaster faced, the following Monday morning, when he sat at the principal's desk and looked at the blackboard on which was written the list of studies that had been personally taught by his predecessor. Of the eight classes in the list, five were studies in which he had never heard a recitation as a pupil! These unfamiliar studies were astronomy, zoology, chemistry, physiology and physics.

Although recognizing the crisis which confronted him, he did not for a moment entertain

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the idea of showing the white feather by shifting these recitations upon his assistant. What should he do? He must think and act at once! Quietly he borrowed from pupils the text-books of those studies and left the room. Hurrying to the "office" in the basement, he spent the two hours and a half before the first of his recitations in devouring the day's lesson in each of these books. Then he called the first class—in astronomy—and heard the recitation in a manner which evidently aroused no suspicion as to his unfamiliarity with the study on the part of the pupils. Then the next class came forward, and the same tactics carried him safely through the ordeal.

After school he bought the entire set of text-books and shut himself up in his room in the hotel. There he wrestled with them until about two in the morning, when things began to swim before his eyes. But he must still have hours more of study before he could feel safe for the ordeal of the morrow. Knowing that nothing would brush the cobwebs out of his eyes like a walk in the open air, he went down to the street and began his exercise. The only public place in the town which showed a light at that hour was the station. Naturally he gravitated there and formed an offhand acquaintance with the night operator, who entertained him for a half-

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hour with tales of the humors of life as seen by the man at the telegraph key. Then, rested and alert, the School-Teacher returned to his books again and wrestled with them until four o'clock in the morning. With occasional variations, this program was repeated night after night by the School-Teacher until his first year at Cresco was finished—and even after that.

Chemistry was the hardest of the new studies he was obliged to master. It was suggested by the students that the former principal had entertained the class with experiments.

"All right," responded the School-Teacher. "We'll also have a few explosions."

After school that day he bought a few chemicals, retreated to the basement of the school and started in to work out some of the simplest experiments he could find in the book. When he emerged from the experience he had verified his own words—a fact to which his singed eyebrows bore eloquent testimony. In order to illustrate certain planetary movements, in the astronomy class, he made from barrel-hoops a rude "apparatus" which served as an admirable object-lesson and delighted the pupils.

His only relief from the high pressure of his hand-to-mouth mastery of six sciences was found on the ball-ground. Here he established himself

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as a comrade with the boys and they became his loyal supporters from the start.

After three months, at the end of the "unexpired term," he was re-elected for three years at a substantial increase of salary. This was a surprise to him, for the struggle had been so close that he had felt no certainty as to the final result. His fear had been so acute that he had never been able to bring himself to return to Strawberry Point for even a Sunday. And the loyal wife had told him: "Forget that you have a family until you can get to where the fight is a little easier."

While the fight was the hottest, however, he struck a snag which cost him an immense amount of labor, but brought out the dominant note of his character as nothing else had done. Concluding that the text-book of geometry used in the school was behind the times, he sent for Chauvenet's treatise and began to master it. Early in this work he found a problem which he could not solve. Night after night he struggled with it and still it evaded him; but the longer he worked the more determined was he to solve it single-handed and alone. For three months he kept steadily at it. Later he learned that it should have been solved by analytics and should not have appeared where it was placed. He also dug

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deep into Bledsoe's Philosophy of Mathematics and the best books on trigonometry.

In his last year at Strawberry Point and his first year at Cresco, Herbert Spencer became his guiding star. But when a copy of Sully's Psychology came into his hands his eyes were opened to the fact that perhaps his great fetish was not without faults. This doubt of Spencer's infallibility disturbed him greatly. About this time he met Professor George P. Brown, an able educator from Bloomington, Illinois, who advised him to write for light to William T. Harris, then of the Concord School of Philosophy—a step which marks the beginning of a peculiar friendship with the man who later became the United States Commissioner of Education.

The School-Teacher's irrepressible energy and his eager capacity for progressive study brought to him, in Cresco, a problem with which he has ever since been forced, in a constantly broadening way, to carry on a running fight. Finding that his teachers were content to drift along on the strength of the attainments which had brought them their certificates and their jobs, he determined to arouse in them, if possible, an aggressive interest in their work. To this end he formed a reading circle and also a Monday Club, to which those outside his teaching-force

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were eligible. Page by page, John Stuart Mill's Political Economy and Spencer's First Principles and Social Statics were read and discussed, and these discussions became recognized as a town institution. Finally it was put into the contract with teachers that they must do a certain amount of progressive work, of study and research.

In a moment of retrospection the realization came to the School-Teacher that he had been teaching for ten years and that he had covered a line of studious reading broader and deeper than the courses of most freshwater colleges. This determined him to try for a life certificate before the State board of examiners, which included the members of the Normal board. He passed well and thought little more of the incident. But the examiners soon after suggested that the Normal board needed him; he became a candidate and was elected. Here he was brought into close association with the foremost educators of the State and his horizon was immediately broadened. His reading, too, took a turn in the direction of pedagogy.

Acquaintance with the geologist and botanist of the State University also added a fresh scope to his investigations; he made a summer field trip with this friend, bought a compound microscope

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and became deeply engrossed in these studies, especially geology.

Next to his re-election for another term of three years, the most significant happening of his Cresco experience was his first tilt with the school-book problem—but not his last! Returning from a series of county institutes he was met by a representative of the "School-Book Trust," as it was commonly called, who informed him that an arrangement had been made with the board to "clean up the old stuff" and give the school an outfit of new text-books in nearly all of the important branches.

"You'll have to guess again," said the young principal. "I'm not going to use text-books of which I do not approve."

Then the agent intimated that he guessed the board would settle that—in fact, had settled it—and the best thing the principal could do was to "be good." That was the signal for a school-book fight which made Cresco famous and the name of its school-principal known beyond the limits of the State. After the book-agent and the School-Teacher had made a personal canvass of the town, the former found his sharp practice overthrown and his "slate" smashed. But this was not the end of the fight—only the beginning. Soon he found himself called upon to advise the

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County Board of School-Book Adoption, with the result that the "trust" arithmetic, readers and speller were thrown out. Educational men from outside the State came to him on the text-book question, and among them was a man from Aurora, Illinois.

Directly as a result of this, the School-Teacher received an invitation to become principal of the East Side Aurora High School at a salary of \$1,700—a position which had been filled by men who had become college professors and presidents and State educational officials. He took the position in August, 1891, and soon found himself facing a new phase of public-school politics: the Boss with a pull.

The first morning, at the stroke of the study-bell, the delinquent son of the Boss began to make trouble. He had evidently been a disturbing element in the situation before and was astonished that he could not at once override the authority of this new principal. Two weeks later he was caught cheating in an examination, was suspended and left school. Then the Boss, whose position in the big car-shops gave him a grip upon a large body of voters, started out to "get" the School-Teacher. The "car-shops crowd" elected the president and three members of the Board of Education—but the Boss could not con-

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firm his charges of partiality and the fight resulted in an increase of salary for the principal. Three months later one of the School-Teacher's supporters on the board died and a special election was held to fill the vacancy. The car-shops candidate was elected and the board stood at a practical tie. Then came the spring election and a fight which passed into local history. The principal was completely vindicated, having buried the opposition and the Boss.

With a prospect of clear sailing ahead, the principal finished his year—and a pleasant year it was, because of his attendance upon the University Extension lectures and the sessions of the Evolution Club in Chicago. At the latter gathering he met Professor Thurston, principal of the La Grange schools, and many kindred spirits. At La Grange, which is midway between Aurora and Chicago, was formed a philosophical club, which the School-Teacher invariably attended. After the close of the school year the young principal found himself in the most novel situation of suffering from an embarrassment of riches, being simultaneously elected to the head of the schools in Duluth, Aurora and La Grange.

Professor Thurston had been urging upon the School-Teacher the advantages of a university degree and had recommended him to fill the va-

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cancy at La Grange caused by his own resignation. "Now," he wrote to the School-Teacher, "you can come here, take your university work and at the same time earn a good living and care for your family." Although the Duluth position paid a much higher salary, the La Grange offer was accepted. The following summer the School-Teacher matriculated in the University of Chicago, taking work with Dr. Dewey in Ethics and Psychology, and a course in English with Professor McClintock. In the following autumn Dr. Harper wrote him, inviting him to come in and consider the opportunity of working out a degree. He gave President Harper a list of his work, both public and private.

For this showing he received credit—on passing the examinations—for three years of college work. He had been going to college without knowing it while digging away in his attic den at Strawberry Point and in his Cresco retreat! But one year's work must be done in residence.

In January he began a course at the University to complete his work for a degree, carrying on the work in a class held after his school at the University from 4 to 6 o'clock. His work was on his old favorite, John Milton. During the Summer term of nine weeks he took a class in English, one in Pedagogy with Dr. Dewey,

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and two classes in French. In addition to this he took another course in French, passing an examination in it after about a week's work. He received three credits in French for his work during the nine weeks together with his work in the other studies. His work brought him not only his bachelor's degree but also a scholarship in English. Here was the harvest of his "midnight oil" with increase of many fold.

Then he took up advanced work and attempted to keep the same pace. But he had reached the breaking point and his mind refused to follow the recitations. The warning that he must relax and let the doctor's degree wait could not be ignored. He could no longer force himself, after a day's work as principal of a large school, to ride forty-six miles to the university for recitations, returning long after the children were abed, and preparing his work before they were up in the morning.

With the vacation came a call to go into the Ohio school-book fight as the representative of a Boston publishing house—at two hundred dollars a month and expenses. The award was to be made August 17, and he had about two months in which to work for the prize. He felt that his first month's work had made an impression, but his firm indicated failing faith by suggesting

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that he get a horse and buggy and work the country districts. He refused, saying he would win the city "adoptions" or nothing. He stuck to the towns, and when the contest was over, a competitor summed up the situation by saying: "The greenhorn agent has made one of the biggest killings on record in the State of Ohio." His competitors did not realize that he had taken a postgraduate course in hand-to-hand trading out in the tall grass of the Iowa prairies and that he knew the inside of school-book fighting from experience on the other side of the contest. But best of all, he returned to La Grange with rugged health and a keen appetite for study.

Meantime, the scholarly E. Benjamin Andrews, who had resigned the presidency of Brown University to become superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools, was learning the heart-breaking game of school politics. The principalship of the Normal School had become vacant through the resignation of Colonel Francis Wayland Parker, who enjoyed a national reputation as a teacher of teachers, and Doctor Andrews was struggling with the board to find a worthy successor to this pedagogical authority. One day a friend, an alumnus of Brown, called upon Doctor Andrews to talk over old times. The conversation turned upon the Normal principalship.

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"There is a man out at La Grange who has the real stuff in him. He's up on philosophy and has a degree from the University of Chicago. I believe that Dr. John Dewey would back him—and perhaps Doctor Harper, too. But of course, you've got to consider the politics of such a move. Don't overlook the fact that this man was the Democratic candidate for county superintendent of schools and ran far ahead of his ticket. There are a lot of Democrats on your board and they're not going to knife him on that account. Think it over."

"I've already named my man, and I shall have to stand by him," responded Doctor Andrews, "but I think he's already beaten. Have your man come and see me."

The School-Teacher responded to the summons and was induced to enter the contest. He saw three members of the Board of Education, but his experience was such that he wrote a letter asking not to be considered further. Meantime, the political waters had been much troubled and a new situation had developed. The answer to his letter was: "You will make a mistake to withdraw as a candidate. Just stick and say nothing." He stuck—but on condition that he should not be expected to run after any more board members. The Normal committee had

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seen Doctor John Dewey and learned from him the notable record made by the School-Teacher in the University, and particularly in philosophy and pedagogical studies. The forty-six-mile bicycle rides had come to a harvest, and in November, '99, the School-Teacher was elected principal of the Cook County Normal School.

Here was a sudden elevation to a position beyond his largest dreams in the old Iowa days. He took the news home with a light heart. But when he placed the matter before the La Grange school trustees they resolutely refused to release him—and he would not leave without an honorable release. A committee from the Chicago Board interceded—but to no avail. This was a dramatic moment for the young educator from the tall grass. He faced the fact that he stood to lose a position to which all of his ambitions called him. When he went back to Doctor Andrews he said:

“It’s no use. My people refuse to let me off, and I’ve got to stick. So you’ll have to elect some other man in my place.”

Then came a turn of affairs which gave the School-Teacher greater satisfaction than his original election. It was a letter from Doctor Andrews, the president of the Board of Education and the chairman of the Normal committee, say-

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ing that they proposed to re-elect him at the end of his La Grange engagement and that he should, in the meantime, visit the Normal School as frequently as possible to familiarize himself with its workings. This he did, and he attended the meeting of the Chicago Board at which the report of the Normal committee, recommending his reelection as head of the Normal institution, was to be acted upon.

But the fates had not yet tired dealing surprises to the young from Cresco. When the Board met to concur, Dr. Christopher, one of the Normal School committee, arose and nominated him Superintendent of Schools to succeed Dr. Andrews, who had wearied of school politics and resigned.

Then came the balloting—and finally the announcement of his election to the hardest school-teaching job in America.

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III.

AN ATTEMPT TO SMOKE THE POLITICAL PESTS OUT OF THE PUBLIC- SCHOOL SYSTEM.

Before he had scarcely caught his breath from the surprise of his election, the School-Teacher found himself assailed on every hand by the abiding pests of the public-school system of Chicago—the politicians. From the moment he first opened his desk until the Board of Education reconvened after the summer vacation, the hum of the political pull was perpetually in his ears.

Never, since he had recovered his educational impulse in the grammar-room of the little school at Strawberry Point, had he thought of the School-Teacher's position as merely a job. He knew the plain and practical bent of his own mind, and knew that his nearest friend would not accuse him of being only an idealist; but it had not occurred to him that there were any great number of decent and self-respecting citizens in the Middle West who held the position of instructing their own and their neighbors' children as a political bone to squabble for—a mere piece

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of political spoils, like an appointment as bridge-tender or deputy oil inspector.

Whatever of idealism the School-Teacher had with regard to American citizenship and the public-school system received a severe jolt in those vacation days which he had dedicated to getting hold of the reins of the school administration and securing a near and practical view of the big problems with which he must deal in a responsible way. Instead of finding his office frequented by teachers, principals, district superintendents and Board members eager to consult with him on measures for the interests of the school children, he awoke to the fact that fully one-half his time was being demanded by politicians inside and outside the ranks of teachers, who came to ask for appointments, transfers and promotions and to impress him with the "backing" which they were able to bring.

The school-teacher as a job-hunter, as a cog in the City Hall "machine," as a side partner with the district boss, the ward-heeler and the precinct captain was a new species to this educator from the tall grass of the Iowa prairies. He was, for the moment, stunned by the force and volume of the current of political pressure which was turned upon him; but soon he began to pull himself together, and when the members

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of the Board of Education returned for the first meeting prior to the opening of the schools he had digested this revelation of public-school politics and was prepared to act.

He realized that it is a far cry from the principalship of an eight-room school in a little prairie town to the administrative head of an educational system composed of 259 big schools, 5,600 teachers and 280,000 pupils. The task of grasping a situation of this magnitude with the determination to establish a new order of things might have staggered a man of slighter physique, of weaker will and less energy; but the bulldog antecedents of the School-Teacher and his long training in the School of Hard Knocks stirred him to grapple with the emergency without loss of a moment. And his opportunity came with the first gathering of the clans.

At this time nominations for appointment, transfer and promotion in the teaching and supervising force were made jointly by the superintendent of schools and the members of the district committee—each district having a committee composed of two or three members of the Board of Education which did its work in secret.

Just before the first meeting of a certain district committee its two members called upon the School-Teacher to arrange for the nomination of

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a list of principals and head assistants in their district.

"I'm new to this situation and I must have a chance, gentlemen," replied the School-Teacher, "to talk this over with the superintendent of your district."

The members of the district committee smiled tolerantly and gave an offhand assent to this suggestion. The district superintendent had been asked who were the best persons to fill the places in question and the list was in the desk of the superintendent of schools. But he was again consulted and his superior was satisfied that the recommendations were good ones.

The afternoon before the session of the big school management committee, the two members of the district committee and the district superintendent suddenly appeared before the School-Teacher and submitted a list of nominations almost wholly different from the one already in possession of the head of the school system.

"Are these your recommendations?" the district superintendent was asked.

"Yes, sir. You see——"

But his stammering explanation was interrupted by the members of the district committee, who pointed to the bottom of the list, and said:

"There's his signature in black and white."

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At this moment a messenger appeared and summoned the School-Teacher before the school management committee. As he went into the room he slipped the recommendations just delivered to him under the stack of papers which he carried in his hand. This, his first important committee session, seemed to drop easily into the commonplace until all the documents in his pile save the last had been disposed of; then very quietly he remarked:

"Here is a list of recommendations signed by the district superintendent and by the district committeemen, but not by myself. I know nothing about them and can make no recommendation on them."

Instantly the chairman of the school management committee reached for the list and put his "O. K." upon it, as upon all the other reports, at the same time declaring the session adjourned.

"What's the meaning of this?" suddenly inquired Chester M. Dawes, a keen lawyer and a son of the late United States Senator Dawes, of Massachusetts.

Briefly the School-Teacher explained to the railroad lawyer the incident which had dictated his course regarding the last list of nominations.

"If I had known the circumstances," said

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Mr. Dawes, "that recommendation would have been held up."

When the School-Teacher found the district superintendent he asked:

"What did you mean by giving me one set of nominations and the district committeemen another?"

"They insisted upon their list," was the reply, "as they always do, and although their list was enough to make angels weep, the pressure they brought to bear made me feel that I must concur. But what can you do?"

"I can stand out and make a fight," answered the School-Teacher, "and that's just what I'm going to do, too."

"Then I'll stand with you," responded the district superintendent, "and do all I can to straighten the thing out." And he did.

Then followed lively sessions with the district committeemen, the chairman of the school management committee and Chester M. Dawes—sessions which made school history in Chicago beyond the realization, at the time being, of those who were concerned in the fight. A truce was called by an agreement that the report in controversy was to be withheld from the full session of the Board of Education.

After one meeting of the Board had passed

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without action upon the matter, the representative of a big city boss, who controlled and dictated conventions, called at the office of the superintendent of schools and "read the riot act" to the School-Teacher, informing him that the name of a niece of the Big Boss was on the list and that it "must go through."

"I'll see the president of the Board about it," declared the emissary of the politician.

He did—and the president sustained the superintendent of schools. The war was on, and the man from the tall grass started in to smoke out of the school system the pest of the professional politicians.

Just before the close of the next session of the Board of Education, the School-Teacher arose and made the request that the Board go into executive session for the purpose of listening to a statement which he wished to make. The president requested all outsiders and members of the press to leave the room, and for the first time in its history the Board was convened in secret session. The School-Teacher realized that he faced a crisis at the very beginning of his administration.

He related his experience with the case in hand, and he asked that a ruling be made on the method of formulating lists of nominees for ap-

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pointment, promotion and transfer which should not only guide the superintendent of schools, but should also be binding upon the members of the Board of Education. His talk opened the eyes of his hearers, and, after a sharp fight, a rule was adopted which left him free to make his recommendations direct to the big school management committee, where they should be heard and discussed in open, before the public and the representatives of the press.

This was a long step in the direction of freeing the public schools of Chicago from the coils of the boa constrictor of political influence, and district committees have never since been consulted regarding nominations.

At the same meeting Chester M. Dawes introduced the resolution which has since borne his name and will always entitle him to the gratitude of those who have the real interest of the pupils of the Chicago public schools at heart. In essence this resolution made it mandatory upon the superintendent of schools to report to the Board of Education the name of every person—whether a member of that Board, a teacher or an outsider—who in any manner sought to influence the nomination for appointment, transfer or promotion of any person to a position in the teaching or supervising force of the public schools.

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This resolution was resented and resisted by a part of the Board, but a majority sustained it after a fight of about two months. Perhaps it was voted for by some members who did not fully realize the effectiveness of publicity as a preventive against the pull evil. At one meeting fourteen of the twenty-one members of the Board were reported as having pulled for various nominees, and their names were printed in the newspapers in connection with the transaction. The names of many "distinguished citizens" were also published, from time to time, in the "pull list," and the people of Chicago began to arouse themselves to the fact that the public schools were being used, and had long been used, as a rich preserve for pot-hunting politicians and professional job-seekers. This hunting-ground was especially tempting to those politicians and citizens who had women relatives and friends whom they wished to "place" on the public pay-roll.

Although this smudge of publicity helped to drive back the political pests, the School-Teacher realized that he had won only the first fight in the long battle against politics in the public schools and that the pressure of influence was always there and ready, on the instant, to take advantage of the least non-resistance, the slightest relaxation, on his part. He realized, too, that

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he must keep pushing ahead in his campaign, or he would lose the ground he had already gained. Not only this, but he must fortify and protect each position gained so that it would be fairly safe from future assault from the political contingent. In this effort he was sustained by a majority of the Board and by the mayor.

There were bosses and ward-heelers obtuse enough to ask why he was so afraid of "a little politics"—had not kissing always gone by favor, and should not a man of influence take care of his friends? Was there anything sacred about a job in the public schools that it must be filled by divine inspiration? To these questions the School-Teacher laid down the law that public schools exist for one purpose alone—**THE BEST GOOD OF PUPILS**; that all other considerations were secondary and insignificant, and that political influence in appointments was bad for the pupils because it did not **PROVIDE** the best teachers, **KEEP** the best teachers, **PROMOTE** the best teachers, or get the best work out of the entire teaching and supervising force. In a certain school, for example, one teacher—and a woman, at that—openly defied the principal and challenged him to report her to the superintendent, adding, significantly, that she could pull more votes in the Board of Education than he

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could. Then, too, the School-Teacher fought politics in school matters not only because it brought poor teaching and supervising timber into service and destroyed discipline, but also because it forced the teachers to think more of cultivating their pulls than their pupils, and it continually occupied the time and energy of the school executives which the good of the children demanded should be spent in dealing with practical educational problems.

Never since he first laid down this platform has the School-Teacher deviated from its simple lines. The politicians and their followers had long been accustomed to think that the public schools EXISTED FOR THE TEACHERS. The School-Teacher's declaration that they existed solely for the pupils seemed a strange doctrine—a bold and blatant heresy which marked the author as a “reform crank.” But the pupils sat up and took notice.

The next advance movement of the School-Teacher was for the securing of a permanent and well-fortified merit system which should make promotion automatic on the basis of efficiency in the school-room and of progressive scholarship. Of course this movement was beset by political snags, but the people had experienced an awakening with regard to their schools, and at

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last the politicians on the Board were compelled to yield to the public sentiment. After more than a year of steady work for his measure, the School-Teacher marked another mile-post in his career by securing the adoption of a merit system which placed the appointment and transfer of all elementary teachers, kindergartners and teachers in positions not involving special qualifications on the basis of scholarship and efficiency in the school-room. Appointments and transfers were made, and have ever since been made, from this merit-list. So far as the list of those eligible for appointment is concerned, the merit-list is an open book and is kept on the public counter in the office of the superintendent of schools, where all comers may freely examine the roll of eligibles and note the relative standing of the applicants for appointment.

And how is this merit-list filled? Briefly, thus: Old teachers who have dropped out of the service and desire reinstatement are the only ones put on this list without "cadet" or probationary service; they are marked according to their old record. Experienced teachers from outside the city are admitted to the eligible list after an examination for scholarship and a satisfactory probationary service of four months as "supplies," their number of rank being fixed by a combination

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of their scholarship and their efficiency marks. The third class—and by far the most numerous one—is that of graduates from the Chicago Normal School, which is maintained expressly as a feeder and an inspiration for the teaching force of the Chicago public schools. Although these cadets are required to do a liberal amount of actual supply-work in the class-rooms of the public practice schools, they are also marked for efficiency by the principals under whom they teach while serving a four months' probation. These marks, together with their scholarship marks in the Normal School, determine their standing on the merit-list, which is revised twice a year. All supply-teachers are assigned, automatically, from the merit-list, and no teacher is regularly employed in an elementary position who has not been tried by this probationary process.

An important evolution from this merit scheme was worked out by the School-Teacher and adopted by the Board of Education. It marked another significant step toward more complete protection from political interference. This is called the salary-grouping system. It classifies all elementary and high-school teachers and principals into groups, and provides that promotions from group to group must be based, first, upon

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efficiency of service in the school-room, as marked by the supervising force, including principals and district superintendents; second, on the evidence of their progressive scholarship shown by examinations, by work done in universities, colleges, certain recognized correspondence schools, or by study under direction of the Chicago Normal School. Upon a combination of their efficiency marks and their proofs of progressive scholarship depends their progress from one salary-group to another.

The opponents of this plan contended that length of service should be the determining factor in salary increase, but the School-Teacher said: "To permit teachers to advance from the minimum salary paid to the highest limit, without let, hindrance or interruption—save that they continue efficient enough to avoid dismissal—absolutely ignores the real purpose for which the school exists—the welfare of the children in the schools—and suggests the necessary effort to get into the system and then letting the clock do the rest." He finally scored a victory over the clock-watchers and secured a rule requiring progressive scholarship. This forced the teacher who secured salary promotion beyond a certain point to keep alive.

In detail the scheme is this: A teacher is re-

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garded as permanent after three years of satisfactory service; up to the end of the seventh year of service the clock is allowed to do the work and the salaries are automatically advanced practically fifty dollars a year. Then teachers must show cause why they should be passed into the next group—a jump which calls for a considerable salary-advance. The teacher is subjected to a test on these points: “Is she a good teacher? Has she kept up her educational processes and methods? Has she kept up her interest in some branch of study outside the limit of her regular professional duties?” Her record for efficiency in the school-room and her proof of study at the Normal School or other recognized college or school, give the answer upon which depends her advancement into the next salary-group. If the answer is satisfactory, the clock works again for three years—each year bringing an increase of salary until the maximum of one thousand dollars, the top salary of the elementary teacher, is reached.

One of the greatest elements in making progressive scholarship an easy matter for Chicago teachers is the Normal Extension movement, the credit for which rests, beyond question, with the School-Teacher. It is his plan and its success is one of his greatest achievements.

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In a report to the Board, in 1903, he said:

"The Normal School extension work began in October, 1902. This work was designed to furnish teachers an opportunity to carry on regular academic and professional work under the direction of instructors furnished at the expense of the Board of Education, and at times and places most convenient for the teacher. * * *

"It would be unwise to narrow the line of instruction given in the course in such a way as to aim at preparation for the examinations only. The extension work should aim higher, and should undertake the all-important task of re-inspiring the old teachers with interest and enthusiasm for their work, and equip them with the most modern ideas as to the ways of doing it. * * * It is generally known that teachers under ordinary conditions reach the maximum limit of their efficiency within five years after they begin to teach. If they grow after this it will be the result not so much of experience in the school-room as of experience in the school-room coupled with persistent study along the lines of academic or professional work. * * * It is almost certain that more than one-half of all the teachers employed by the Board of Education are engaged in some sort of active systematic work looking toward self-improvement. The

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city of Chicago has reason to feel sure that its teachers are awake, and that they are growing."

Since that time the proportion of teachers who have joined the "Keep Alive Club"—the Normal Extension movement—has fully held its own and perhaps increased. This summer the phenomenal number of 731 teachers have asked for the Normal Extension course in August.

The School-Teacher's influence in the Normal School itself has been strongly felt. He urged that the regular course be extended in length from one year to two years, and this was done and departments for the training of kindergarten teachers and teachers of domestic science have been added. To bring the Normal School instructors into closer contact with the practical work of actual teaching in the big class-rooms, as contrasted with the small "experimental" classes of Normal School, "the practice school" heads of departments have been required to regularly visit the public school-rooms and report upon the conditions encountered there. This contact with teaching conditions "in the large" has reached not only the Normal School instructors and students, but also the students of the Normal Extension courses.

Reorganization of the system of school administration also imposed a heavy burden upon the

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shoulders of the School-Teacher and opened another means of placing further obstacles in the way of the school politician. First, the number of district superintendents was reduced from fourteen to six, and later to four. In the old days each district superintendent was practically supreme in his district. Now the assignment of teachers, the making of transfers, and all kindred matters are handled by these superintendents sitting as a board, thus working together along the line of a common policy to a common end. These superintendents practically constitute a Board of Equalization on educational matters, not only as to the marking of teachers and principals for efficiency and the transfer and dismissal of teachers, but also on methods of teaching, matters of discipline, the equitable distribution of school equipment and supplies, the locating and building of new school-houses, the placing of kindergarten, manual training and domestic science centers and of playgrounds. All these matters were once subject to the influence of local politicians, but are now handled with reference to the needs of the children and the good of the whole school system, instead of being at the mercy of politicians and citizens seeking to serve their immediate ends.

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IV.

THE FEDERATION FIGHT.

No problem with which the School-Teacher has had to deal can be considered as more important than that of the Teachers' Federation, because, stripped of all disguises, the real animus of this secret organization is to run the public schools for the teachers instead of for the pupils. But this statement is altogether too generous; it should be qualified by the clause: for the teachers who belong to the Federation. Again, the Federation fight is significant to every educator, and every public-school pupil in America because the organization is being systematically extended to towns and cities throughout the entire country. And, finally, it is most important, because it is the latest model and the highest type of the political machine especially adapted to school politics. It is warranted to show efficiency in the tightest and most prohibitive situations where the old-style political machine is powerless and obsolete.

The present power of the Teachers' Federation is almost wholly due to the fact that, under the leadership of two remarkable women, Miss Mar-

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garet Haley and Miss Catherine Goggin, formerly school-teachers, it went out after certain tax-dodging public service corporations in Chicago, and, after an extended and sensational fight, compelled them to disgorge considerably more than \$200,000 in evaded tax money. Of this the school fund of the city received, on a decision by Judge Edward F. Dunne, now mayor of Chicago, \$126,673.79. This was apportioned, by the Board of Education, between the educational and the building funds. As the Board indicated a disposition to use this sum for current expenses, instead of the payment of certain claims for back salaries, the Federation, in the name of Miss Catherine Goggin and 1,643 others, mainly Federationists, sued the Board for a total of \$218,638.15. Judge Dunne's decision on this claim released to the litigating teachers the sum of \$73,980. In the words of the report of the president of the Board:

"This decision is based on the theory that when the Board of Education elected teachers in June, 1899, said teachers so elected were entitled to the salary then in force for the next ensuing school year, and not simply to the end of the calendar year, as was the custom of the Board for years; and further, on the fact that the city council at its meeting on April 4, 1900, in connection with the passing of an ordinance entitled, 'An Ordi-

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nance Making Appropriation for Corporate, Schools and Public Library Purposes, for the fiscal year from January 1, 1900, to December 31, 1900,' adopted a resolution in connection with the said ordinance which reads as follows: 'A sufficient amount of this sum appropriated shall be expended in restoring salaries of experienced school-teachers for 1900.' "

The new Board of Education passed a resolution instructing counsel for the Board—who had already rendered an opinion "that the finding of Judge Dunne's decision in this case is clearly erroneous as to the \$73,980 and that it will undoubtedly be reversed on appeal"—to withdraw the appeal and disburse the money to the litigating teachers. This move was but recently carried through and the money has lately been paid to the litigants.

The Teachers' Federation has been doing business ever since its attack upon the corporate tax dodgers on the capital of its victory in that campaign, and its success in the "back salary" fight has been the backbone of its standing with the teachers. Upon this accomplishment it has systematically set out to subjugate the school management to its purposes and its control. It has systematically assailed the Board of Education and the superintendent of schools as tools of the "pluto-

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crats" and "tax-doging corporations"; it has assailed the plan basing teachers' salaries on efficiency and progressive scholarship; it has demanded a schedule of salaries based on length of service only; it has proposed to take the initiative in the selection of text-books out of the hands of the superintendent of schools and his advisers and throw it into the hands of the grade teachers; it has demanded the "democratization" of the schools by the creation of councils of teachers having authority to deal with important administrative and pedagogical questions as an advisory body; it has repeatedly sent its lobby to Springfield to oppose legislation for the better organization of the school system, including a bill presented by the Board of Education, after its adoption by the unanimous vote of the Board; it has put up a cry against the "autocratic power of the school principals," and it has consistently labored for the unionizing of the public schools.

The Teachers' Federation is a secret organization, so far as its rank and file, its methods and purposes are concerned. In every school where it has one or more members it has a correspondent whose duty it is secretly and regularly to inform the officials of the Federation on all matters believed to be of interest to them. The Chicago Tribune recently contained a letter from the only

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male teacher in the school where he is employed stating that the correspondent of the Federation in the school wields more power than the principal. The "drag" of the Federation is such that in all matters of discipline involving teachers belonging to it, the power of the Federation quickly makes itself felt. It is affiliated in Chicago with the Federation of Labor.

These facts regarding the Teachers' Federation are familiar to the citizens of Chicago; they have been frequently commented on in the newspapers and in educational journals—perhaps nowhere more intelligently than in the Educational Review, of November, 1905, in an article written by David Swing Ricker, the regular representative of the Chicago Tribune at the meetings of the Board of Education.

One of the latest phases of Federation activity is a plan to abolish the efficiency and progressive scholarship test in the matter of promotions and to raise the salaries of thousands of teachers who have declined to stand the existing promotional tests. On this score the Chicago Chronicle, of July 21, 1906, makes this terse editorial comment:

"Everything the school-teachers do is for the purpose of getting more money. No sooner had the proceeds of the lawsuit against the State

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Board of Equalization been distributed among them than they started an agitation for increased pay. They want a new schedule which will give them about 100 per cent more salary than they get at present.

"This is the immediate and premeditated effect of Mayor Dunne's appointment, stuffing the Board of Education with the socialistic partisans of the Teachers' Federation. Nobody in this city begrudges an able and faithful school-teacher a liberal salary, but the Chicago teachers are already better paid than the teachers anywhere else in this country, and as for those teachers who belong to the Teachers' Federation they ought to be kicked out of the schools altogether."

The Chicago Record-Herald has an editorial, of the same date, remarking:

"'I am opposed to the promotional examination,' said President Ritter of the School Board. 'I feel certain the teachers neglect the children in order to prepare for the promotional tests. Frankly, I do not know of any plan I will indorse as a substitute, but I am convinced the present system should be materially modified—if not eliminated altogether.'

"This interview with its confession of ignorance indicates a purely destructive policy. But it is no more destructive than the policy that was

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outlined in a report of a substitute that was printed at the same time. Under the substitute efficient teachers would advance with clock regularity, and efficient teachers would be all teachers against whom no charge of inefficiency or unfitness had been proved.

“That, of course, means nothing but promotion by seniority. Instead of a compulsory test for advancement applicable to all alike, there is a mere chance of haphazard accusations which no one is likely to make except for personal reasons.

“So the president and the substitute lead us to nothing at all. It is to be hoped that these are not true signs of what the dispensation under the new Board is to be. If they are, the progress of the Chicago schools will be backward.”

To indicate further the attitude of the public press in Chicago regarding the destructive policy of the reorganized Board of Education, which has now become much more clearly defined than when these editorials were written, let two other newspapers speak for themselves.

Here is a paragraph from an editorial in the Chicago Tribune:

“It is said also that the program contemplates the ‘democratizing’ of the management of school affairs by giving the teachers more power, and by abolishing regulations which are offensive

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to some of the teachers because exacting of them a high standard of efficiency. If such a program were to be carried out, the schools would be demoralized and the children would suffer. The teachers are not hired to give instruction to the trustees as to their duties, but to teach the children that are put in their care. The management of the schools is placed by the law in the hands of trustees and not of some Federated employees."

In its editorial utterances the Chicago Daily News is noted for its mildness, its ultra-conservatism. But the following editorial, in its issue of July 11, has no uncertain sound:

"The mayor apparently has aimed to deliver up the city's great system of schools to persons advocating the principles put forward by the leading spirits of the Teachers' Federation. He has attempted to make of the school system a laboratory for the testing of the Federation's half-baked ideas. He has subjected the city to the danger of a general upsetting of responsible school management and the substitution of more or less impossible makeshifts. Mayor Dunne, the chief administrator of the affairs of a community of two million souls, has permitted himself to be a cat's-paw of a few inflamed enemies of the best system of school administration Chicago has ever had.

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Having been weak enough to let down the bars for them, he may be expected to shuffle and dodge responsibility if his appointees get to running amuck in the interests of chaos and the Teachers' Federation. His dodging will not help him. He alone is responsible for the composition of the new school board."

Referring to the scheme introduced by Dr. Cornelia De Bey to "democratize" the public schools, the Chicago Chronicle has this to say:

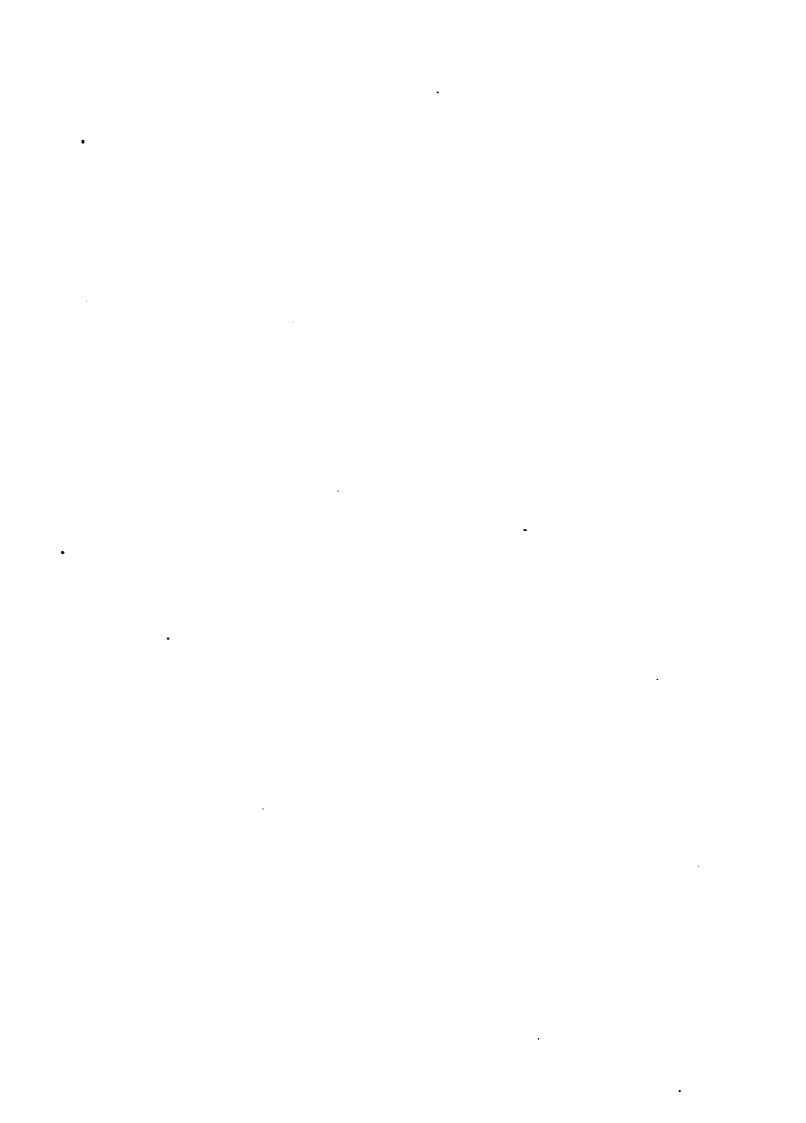
"Dr. De Bey, though one of the trustees herself, is on the Board, like some others, apparently for the sole purpose of subverting its authority. * * * As Trustee Dudley observes, this contemplates a revolution. * * * The Board has long since abdicated in favor of its employees. No one can understand clearly what Dr. De Bey's proposed system means, as it is almost unthinkable in its folly, and therein lies the impudence of it. * * * It is a brazen and insolent challenge to the Board to hand over its authority to the teachers and make the trustees the employees of the teachers instead of the teachers being the employees of the trustees. This is equivalent to proposing that the public schools, on which the city is spending twelve million dollars a year, shall be completely disrupted and the public-school system abandoned. It needs no perspi-

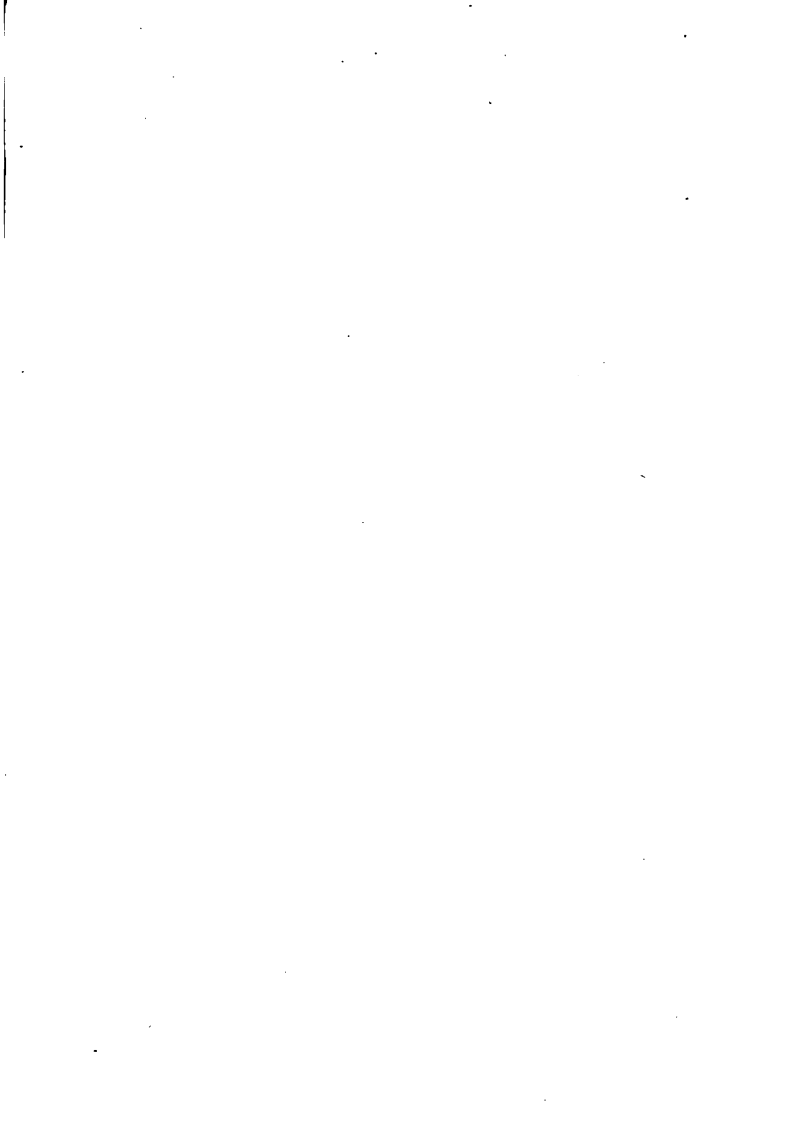
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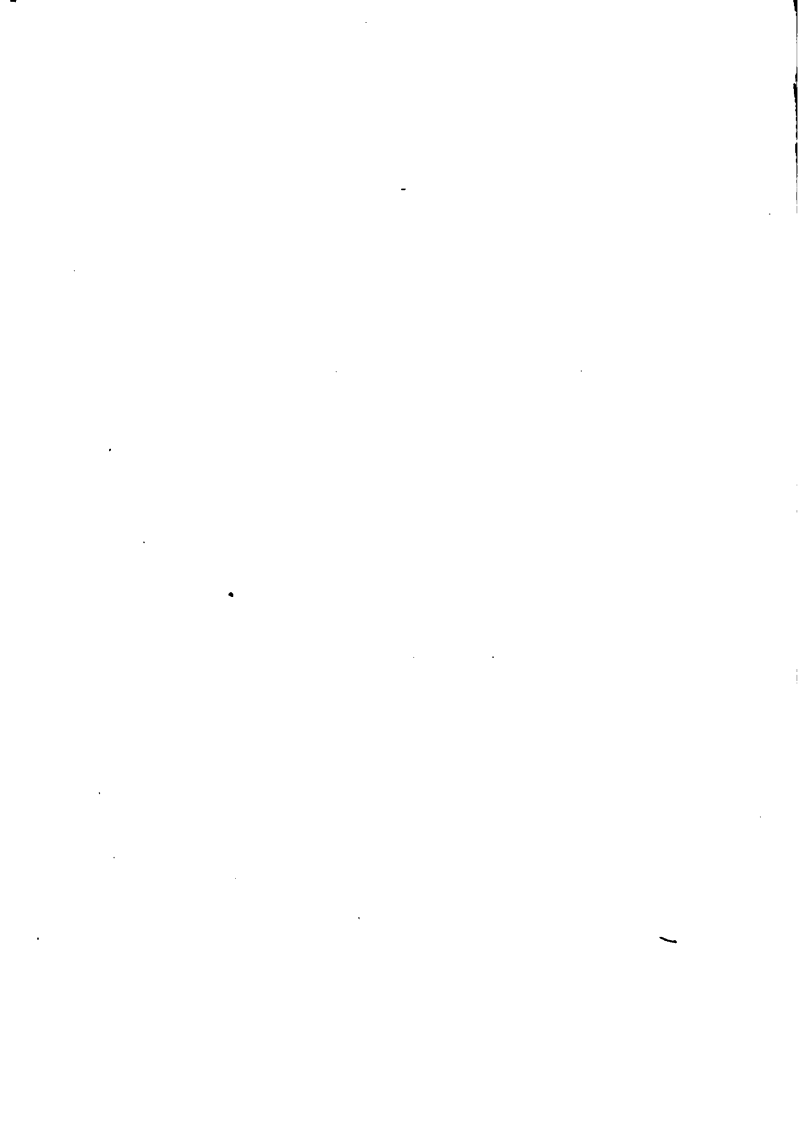
cacity to see that the whole infamous plot emanates from the Teachers' Federation and Margaret Haley and the socialistic influences with which they are connected."

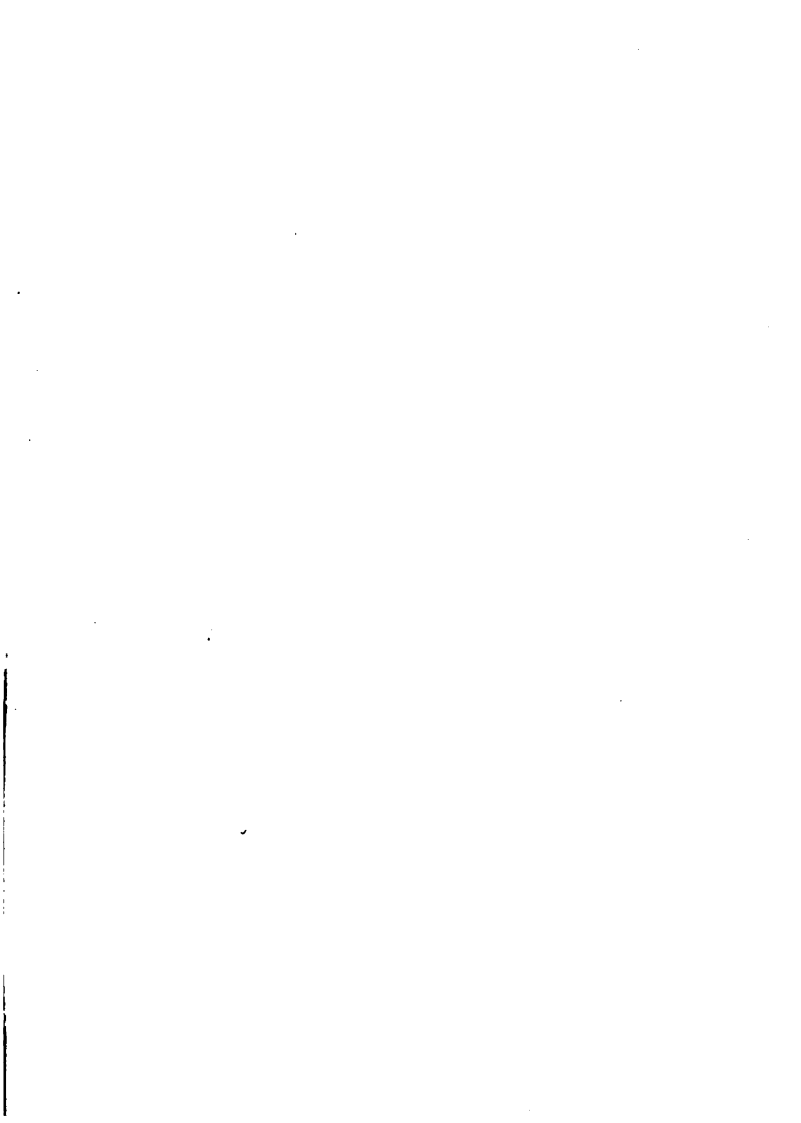
It is not to be taken for granted, however, that all the appointees of Mayor Dunne who are classed as "radicals" will lend themselves to the revolutionary program and purposes of the Teachers' Federation leaders; the chiefs of this educational Tammany are bound to be disappointed in some of the late recruits, for some of them are too big, too conscientious and too fair-minded deliberately to take part in the sacking of the educational structure which the School-Teacher and his supporters have erected and are defending.

But if they do not have ears to hear the outcry of the people and the press they can easily wreck the educational structure, to the building of which the School-Teacher has devoted six years of tireless work and a rare genius for educational administration,











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